AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the

application:

1.   (Currently amended) A performance prediction system, comprising:

at least one memory to store a plurality of computer program components, the

computer program components further comprising:

a query component for receiving performance queries submitted by

users for data relevant to the probability that a transactions

with an entity entities of interest will be successful;

a data gathering component for storing deriving query-relevant data

about submitted queries from the submitted performance

queries, where at least part of the query-relevant data is

derived from information reflected in the performance

queries; and for storing the query-relevant data; and

a query fulfillment component for providing data relevant to the

probability that transactions with entities of interest will be

successful to the users submitting performance queries; and

a meta-query component responsive to a meta-query for returning for

receiving meta-queries from users, wherein the meta-queries

seek enhanced performance prediction information; for

querying the stored query-relevant data to gather the enhanced

performance prediction information, and for providing the

enhanced performance prediction information to users

submitting the meta-queries; ~~regarding previously submitted~~

~~queries;~~ and

at least one data processor to execute the computer program components.

2.   (Currently amended) A system as in claim 1, where the plurality of computer

program components further comprises a performance-prediction component that uses data

comprising the stored submitted query data in making estimations relevant to the likelihood

of success of a transaction involving the ~~entity~~ entities of interest.

3.   (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, where the meta-query

component returns copies of submitted queries when executed.

4.   (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, where the meta-query

component returns edited copies of submitted queries when executed.

5.   (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, where the meta-query

component returns an indication of a number of queries that have been submitted to the

system during a particular time period when executed.

6.   (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, where the meta-query component when executed allows a user to register to be notified at some future time of submitted queries that are received about that user.

7.   (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, where the meta-query component when executed allows a user to register to be notified whenever a specified number of queries about that user have been submitted to the system.

8.   (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, where the query component when executed also comprises a discovery component that allows users to receive a list of entities that satisfy certain criteria.

9.   (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, where the meta-query component when executed allows a business to obtain information about queries submitted to the system during a particular time period, and which returned a list of companies that include that business.

10.   (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, where the meta-query component when executed allows a business to obtain information about queries submitted to the system during a particular time period, and which returned a list of companies that did not include that business.

11.   (Currently amended) A system as in claim ~~1~~2, where the performance prediction component determines statistical correlations between patterns of submitted queries when executed.

12.   (Currently amended) A system as in claim 11, where the performance prediction component when executed uses one of actual and predicted performance of entities, and uses ~~the~~ statistical correlations to predict likely future performance based on past and present query data.

13.   (Currently amended) A performance prediction service accessible by a user over a data communications network, said service comprising:

a computer program stored on a computer readable media, wherein <u>when</u> the

computer program <u>is executed by a data processor the following operations</u>

<u>are performed:</u> ~~uses~~

<u>using</u> knowledge acquired in responding to previously submitted

queries which sought data relevant to the probability that a

transaction with an entity of interest would be successful

when making predictions concerning the future performance

of the entity of interest<u>, wherein the submitted queries were</u>

<u>submitted by users who were considering transacting business</u>

<u>with the entity of interest;</u> ~~and~~

saving the predictions; and

providing the predictions to users submitting later queries; and

a data processor to execute the computer program.

14. (Previously presented) A performance prediction service as in claim 13, where said computer program further analyzes query patterns and at least one of an actual or predicted performance of the entity of interest, and observes correlations between queries, query patterns and performance to facilitate the prediction of future performance of the entity of interest when executed by the data processor.

15. (Previously presented) A performance prediction service as in claim 13, where said computer program further returns, in response to receiving a meta-query from the user, information that is descriptive of previously submitted queries about the entity of interest when executed by the data processor.

16. (Previously presented) A performance prediction service as in claim 13, where said computer program further returns, in response to receiving a meta-query from the user, edited information that is descriptive of previously submitted queries about the entity of interest when executed by the data processor.

17. (Previously presented) A performance prediction service as in claim 13,

where said computer program further returns, in response to receiving a meta-query from the

user, copies of previously submitted queries about the entity of interest when executed by the

data processor.

18.   (Currently amended) A performance prediction system, comprising:

at least one memory to store a plurality of computer program components, the

computer program components further comprising:

a query component for ~~fulfilling~~ receiving performance queries ~~received~~ from

users, ~~wherein the queries seek data relevant to the probability that a~~

~~transaction with an entity of interest will be successful~~ where the

performance queries seek performance prediction data concerning

entities of interest; for collecting the performance prediction data and

for providing the performance prediction data to users;

a source of ~~data comprising~~ performance prediction data, the source coupled

to ~~said~~ the query component;

a data gathering component for ~~collecting~~ deriving query-relevant data ~~for~~

from submitted performance queries and for storing the query-

relevant data in a submitted query database, where at least part of the

query-relevant data is derived from information contained in the

submitted performance queries; ~~and~~

a meta-query component ~~responsive to a received meta-query and~~ coupled to

the submitted query database <u>for receiving meta-queries from users</u>

<u>seeking enhanced performance prediction data</u>; for accessing the

query-relevant data ~~for producing~~ <u>to produce</u> enhanced performance

prediction information ~~that comprises~~ <u>derived from</u> query-relevant

information<u>, and for providing the enhanced performance prediction</u>

<u>data to users</u>; and

at least one data processor to execute the components of the computer program.

19.   (Original) The system as in claim 18, wherein the enhanced performance

prediction information comprises filtered query-relevant information.

20.   (Currently amended) A computer program product comprising a memory

medium storing a computer program operable to provide performance prediction information

when executed by a data processor, wherein operations are performed when the computer

program is executed by the data processor, the operations comprising:

receiving queries from users regarding at least one entity of interest, wherein the

queries seek data relevant to the probability that a transaction with the entity

of interest will be successful<u>, wherein the users are considering transacting</u>

<u>business with the entity of interest</u>; ~~and~~

using knowledge acquired when responding to previously submitted queries which

sought data relevant to the probability that a transaction with the entity of

interest would be successful when making predictions concerning the future

performance of the entity of interest;

saving the predictions; and

providing the predictions to users submitting queries.

21.   (Currently amended) A computer program product as in claim 20, wherein

the ~~operation~~ operations further comprise analyzing query patterns and at least one of an

actual or predicted performance of the entity of interest, and observing correlations between

queries, query patterns and performance to facilitate the prediction of future performance of

the entity of interest.

22.   (Previously presented) A computer program product as in claim 20, wherein

the operations further comprise returning, in response to receiving a meta-query from a user,

information that is descriptive of previously submitted queries about the entity of interest.

23.   (Previously presented) A computer program product as in claim 20, wherein

the operations further comprise returning, in response to receiving a meta-query from a user,

edited information that is descriptive of previously submitted queries about the entity of

interest.

24.   (Previously presented) A computer program product as in claim 20, wherein

the operations further comprise returning, in response to receiving a meta-query from a user, copies of previously submitted queries about the entity of interest.

25.   (Previously presented)   The computer program product as in claim 20, wherein the operations further comprise collecting query-relevant data comprising at least one of time, date, location, and identity.

26.   (Previously presented)   The computer program product as in claim 25, wherein the operations further comprise filtering the enhanced performance prediction information to remove at least some of the collected query-relevant data.

27.   (Previously presented)   The computer program product as in claim 20, wherein the operations further comprise registering for automatically querying the acquired knowledge.

28.   (Previously presented) The computer program product as in claim 27, where automatic querying is initiated upon the occurrence of at least one specified criterion.

29.   (Currently amended)   A computer program product stored on a computer readable media for directing operations of a data processor to execute a method to receive submitted queries for performance prediction information concerning an entity of interest,

wherein the queries are submitted by users, and wherein the users are considering transacting

business with the entity of interest; to collect query-relevant data from the submitted queries;

to store the query-relevant data; and to use at least some of the query-relevant data to provide

enhanced performance prediction information concerning the entity of interest.

30.   (Currently amended)   A system for producing enhanced performance

prediction information, the system comprising: means for receiving submitted queries,

wherein the queries seek data relevant to a probability that a transaction with an entity of

interest will be successful, wherein the queries are submitted by users, and wherein the users

are considering transacting business with the entity of interest; means for deriving query-

relevant data from the submitted queries, where at least part of the query-relevant data is

derived from information contained in the submitted queries; memory means for storing

query-relevant data; and data processor means for producing enhanced performance

prediction information that comprises the query-relevant data and for providing the enhanced

performance prediction data to users submitting queries.

31.   (Currently amended) A system comprising:

a performance prediction service for receiving queries seeking performance

prediction information concerning an entity of interest, wherein the queries

are submitted by users, and wherein the users are considering transacting

business with the entity of interest, and for providing performance prediction

information in response to the received queries;

a communications device for operation with the performance prediction service, comprising a communications interface adapted ~~for at least one of~~ submitting a meta-query to the performance prediction service and for receiving enhanced performance prediction information from the performance prediction service <u>in response to the metaquery</u>.

32.   (Currently amended)   The system of claim 31 where the performance prediction service comprises:

a source of data comprising at least performance prediction data, the data source being coupled to a query component adapted for receiving the meta-query and executing the meta-query;

a data ~~gather~~ <u>gathering</u> component adapted for collecting query-relevant data for fulfilling meta-queries, and storing the query-relevant data in a submitted query database; and

a meta-query component coupled to the submitted query database adapted for querying the query-relevant data to produce the enhanced performance prediction information in response to the reception of the meta-query from the communications device.

33.   (Currently amended) A computer program product stored on a computer

readable media, the computer program product comprising:

a query component for receiving <u>performance</u> queries submitted by users, ~~for data~~

~~relevant to the probability that a transaction with an entity of interest will be~~

~~successful~~ <u>where the performance queries seek performance prediction data</u>

<u>concerning entities of interest; for collecting the performance prediction data;</u>

<u>and for providing the performance prediction data to the users</u>;

a data gathering component for ~~storing~~ <u>deriving query-</u>relevant data ~~about~~ <u>from</u>

submitted <u>performance</u> queries <u>and for storing the query-relevant data, where</u>

<u>at least part of the query-relevant data is derived from information contained</u>

<u>in the submitted performance queries</u>; and

a meta-query component ~~responsive to a meta-query for returning information~~

~~regarding previously submitted queries~~ <u>for receiving meta-queries from users</u>

<u>seeking enhanced performance prediction data; for accessing the query-</u>

<u>relevant data to produce enhanced performance prediction information</u>

<u>derived from query-relevant information; and for providing the enhanced</u>

<u>performance prediction data to users.</u>